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SUBJECT: INDONESIA'S SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES: HUMAN
RIGHTS AND ENGAGEMENT

REF: JAKARTA 1057

Classified By: CDA John A. Heffern, for reasons 1.5 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: The Army Special Operations Forces (KOPASSUS) of Indonesia's Armed Forces (TNI) remains outside the ambit of U.S.-Indonesian military-to-military cooperation. This message reviews its progress on the critical issue of human rights and provides an update on current Mission Jakarta steps to assess this progress with a view to gradual engagement in the future. The Jakarta office of the International Red Cross Commission (ICRC), which has been providing a comprehensive program of human rights training to KOPASSUS for several years, recommends U.S. engagement, as do the Australians. End Summary.

BACKGROUND: KOPASSUS' ROLE IN TODAY'S INDONESIA

12. (U) Standard briefing materials provided by KOPASSUS characterize the mission and function of the force in the following terms. KOPASSUS:

- conducts special operations on "chosen strategic targets" under the command of the Panglima (commander-in-chief); special operations include separatism, VVIP protection, counterterrorism, national vital object protection, search and rescue and disaster relief;
- can be deployed independently, under the Panglima or in support of the military regional commands;
- trains other units in tactical operations; training teams can support military regional command forces or forces of friendly nations;
- has direct action, reconnaissance, unconventional warfare and counterterrorism capabilities; and
- recruits from the Strategic Forces (KOSTRAD), regional commands (KODAM), Infantry School and directly from the civilian population.

ENGAGEMENT BY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

13. (C) KOPASSUS conducts joint training with counterpart forces from Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia and is in the process of arranging joint training with the Philippines and South Korea. Our Australian counterparts often encourage us to resume training for KOPASSUS. As part of the Indonesian Armed Forces, KOPASSUS has deployed under UN PKO to Bosnia, Cambodia, Egypt, Georgia, Sierra Leone, Kuwait, Congo and Lebanon.

HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING

14. (U) KOPASSUS leaders assure us that their soldiers are trained according to the norms of international human rights law and that all soldiers attend a one-week seminar on human rights and the law of war (Geneva Convention) conducted in

coordination with the ICRC. Every soldier carries an illustrated pocket manual issued by the TNI containing its Rules of Engagement. Additional training courses have been offered, such as a Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) seminar in San Remo, Italy in 2003. KOPASSUS also cooperates with the Norway Center for Human Rights. KOPASSUS also maintains that, in contrast to the Suharto era, verbal orders are no longer executable and that all operational orders must be written and signed.

15. (C) In an extensive information exchange between USPACOM and Embassy representatives and KOPASSUS counterparts at TNI headquarters in January 2007, KOPASSUS highlighted its efforts to improve its human rights training and accountability. Since 1998 there has been a growing institutional realization of the need for human rights training, implementation and oversight. In late 1998, KOPASSUS began receiving human rights training as part of a TNI-wide program and also began incorporating human rights into two key phases of their Commando training: the Base Camp, and Jungle/Mountain training. Training included issuance and study of a Human Rights Handbook, in both English and Bahasa Indonesia. In 2003, they requested and established a KOPASSUS-specific human rights program administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the TNI Headquarters law office. In 2006, ICRC provided two train-the-trainer programs for unit leaders (NCO and Officer) who in turn would provide unit-wide training. Training included case studies and other classroom activities, as well as practical training in the field.

ICRC TRAINING

16. (C) ICRC representatives in Geneva and Jakarta have independently verified KOPASSUS participation in the

human-rights train-the-trainer program and noted Indonesian participation exceeded the 50 allotted slots in the November 2006 session. According to Georges Paclisanu, the ICRC Head of Delegation in Jakarta, the TNI has a comprehensive human rights training program which includes KOPASSUS. Paclisanu favors KOPASSUS' reintegration into bilateral assistance and mil-mil programs. He described the ICRC's reform program with the TNI, which he said was successfully completed. The program consisted of three parts:

- 1) a review of all TNI combat doctrine to ensure its compliance with international norms such as the Geneva Convention;
- 2) operational training, conducted at bases and military professional schools, on procedures and the rules of engagement;
- 3) direct dissemination of human rights precepts at senior military educational institutions and with specific units immediately prior to deployment (e.g., to Aceh, Papua, Lebanon).

Paclisanu said KOPASSUS participated in such training fully and on the same terms as other forces within the TNI. The ICRC's approach was designed to be uniform and thorough.

17. (C) In terms of measuring results of human rights training, Paclisanu stressed the comprehensive and long-term nature of the approach, which was to instill values in a new generation during its formative years. It would take another decade for this generation to work itself through the system into positions of leadership. He also said the ICRC was largely train-the-trainer, leaving most of the work to the TNI. He noted that, with the end of the conflict in Aceh and the military's withdrawal from counterterrorism and other domestic security operations, the ICRC had diminished opportunity to observe the TNI (and KOPASSUS) in action. Central Sulawesi was the responsibility of the police, not the military, and Papua's low-level insurgency had not provoked strong clashes, at least since the Abepura riots of early 2006. That said, the ICRC's agreement with the TNI

includes monitoring, and the ICRC could and did observe combat exercises and other training events. The TNI's receptiveness and the consistency of its positive response to ICRC, he said, suggested that the training was taken seriously and was having a significant impact.

¶8. (C) Paclisanu offered his personal opinion that further restrictions on KOPASSUS were "inappropriate" to the progress the TNI had made on human rights, and should be lifted. He asserted that because of the regular rotation of troops in and out of conflict zones where abuses had occurred, it was virtually impossible to make fair and accurate human-rights distinctions among those who had been there: all were tainted by the fact that they belonged to the unit, and all were acting under the same orders. What special forces in particular needed most at this point, he emphasized, was the exposure to foreign values, doctrine, training and contacts such as the rest of the TNI was receiving, which would reinforce the impulse toward professionalization and reform.

CURRENT MISSION-PROPOSED AGENDA

¶9. (C) Our preliminary steps toward re-engagement have so far included three events.

-- The first of these was a KOPASSUS assessment visit in January 2007 to gauge KOPASSUS' progress in human rights training and other aspects of the development of a more professional force.

-- The second of these was to invite a KOPASSUS representative to a PASOC conference on counterterrorism in Hawaii during the week of April 16. The conference brought together special operations force leaders from 18 countries, plus interagency and multinational stakeholders, academics and experts. Indonesia's participation fell through because of BG Darmono's objections to human-rights vetting (see reftel).

-- Third, we had originally scheduled a Mobile Education Team (MET) event for May 13-20 with instructors from the Joint Special Operations University and SOF members from SOCPAC. We plan to invite 4-6 students, vetted individually, from the Navy, Air Force and Army Special Forces (KOPASSUS). This MET has now been postponed by approximately one month, and new dates have yet to be set.

¶10. (C) The First Actual Joint Combined Exercise Training

(JCET) with KOPASSUS is scheduled for July 23-August 10 at KOPASSUS Group 1 headquarters in Serang, West Java. This non-lethal event will involve air operations, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and human rights. The Initial Planning Conference was held last week. The purpose of the JCET is to measure the results of KOPASSUS efforts to correct deficiencies and lay the groundwork for future combat-related JCETs. The JCET would also provide an opportunity to observe the extent of implementation and internalization of institutionalized human rights training.

HEFFERN